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box, while two men supported the lower portion. The top poles were pulled free. The man at the upper end of the pit ordered the lower end to be lowered as far as possible whereupon he let his own end drop into the grave, the length and width of which barely accommodated the coffin. The rope was then pulled up. Old Man, removing one mitten, bent down and tossed a handful of earth on top of the coffin. Mrs. Man and Lady Suza followed suit, but without removing their mittens. Harry and Hans then began to shovel dirt into the grave and the other people started returning to the settlement. During the digging of the grave only Lady Suza was tense and mute. The other people, including the working men, chatted of many things without any show of constraint.

Mourning by closely related kin may continue for several months, morning being a time when a woman will feel particularly sad and apt to cry. In time the intensity of mourning wears off. It is, however, often promoted when women are intoxicated, weeping or even sobbing for long deceased children being a characteristic feature of women's drinking.

Sometime after the interment of the deceased, the clothing worn by the individual at the time of death is burned. Any other possessions, such as packsacks and blankets, which are worn out or old and not desired by relatives as mementos, are also destroyed. Other possessions, like guns, files, axes, and snowshoes are distributed to relatives and friends. Good quality blankets and eiderdowns, after being kept out of use for a time, are thoroughly washed with soap and water and rinsed for future use by members of the deceased person's family. Certain decorative possessions, such as fancy moccasins or an ornamented dog harness, are kept as mementos by a surviving parent, a spouse, or child. A woman may also keep her dead mother's tanning tools. Old Man reported that he could never leave his present home for if he started to "move around" he would lose clothing and other objects that had been associated with his dead son and to which he wanted to hold on. He still used his deceased daughter's silver plated cup, referring to it as "the ghost cup." The dwelling in which the person died remains uninhabited for a week or two and is then reoccupied. Sometimes a tent frame or tent is permanently abandoned following death.

Following the death of a husband or wife, young children may be raised by the surviving spouse or given in adoption. A man will generally entrust the care of his children to his mother-in-law. When Mary Wiley's husband died in the spring of 1945, the latter's brother, Edward Cross, took the widow to his trap line. Old Man explained that Edward did not want his sister-in-law to "run around" too soon after her husband's death. It is felt that a widow should wait at least a year before seeking new attachments. Following the death of her husband, a woman retains his name until she remarries.

As participants of the Roman Catholic Church, most of the Kaska have been taught to pray for the dead. Such prayers, however, are rarely said outside of church services. Following the burial of the body, there is little tendency to revisit the graveyard. In the fall of 1945, River Joe asked his son-in-law, Louis Maza, to construct a fence around the plot where Joe's wife and Louis' baby were buried. Following the completion of the fence, he placed a purchased gravestone over his wife's grave. A few days before this occasion Joe accompanied his son-in-law to Old Kean's place, where the rest of the Upper Liard Indians were temporarily staying, and invited them to share a brew. There would be a "little party," he explained, to celebrate the erection of the stone and the completion of the graveyard fence. A

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their possession of power, tracing it to the agency of animals. As near as could be learned, power (which is sometimes called "medicine") denotes that the person is under the protection of an animal supernatural on whose assistance he can rely. Any animal or game bird can bestow such benefits on an individual, who may solicit their interest by isolating himself in the bush. Apparently, however, purposeful isolation is not essential in order to obtain supernatural help, a person sometimes receiving an indication of such attention without any effort on his part. The acquisition of power is signalled by a vision or, perhaps, a dream in which an animal manifesting human attributes speaks to the individual. Sometimes a vision is not readily forthcoming even when solicited and was in fact denied to Nitla who said: "Some people go stay in brush alone. Got medicine. I can't make it, me. I'm too young. I'm just try first time. Nothing see me . . . Something don't want me." He was not disturbed on account of this lack of success. 778 776

A different type of supernatural power, one that is more readily talked about, promotes aid and protection. This may be acquired through possession of religious symbols like crucifixes, prayer books, and rosaries. Many people carry such objects on their persons whenever they leave camp. Once Nitla said that he would request the "mission man to give cross for me and wife. Grizzly bear can't bother that one. Somebody say that way. I believe him." Lowering his voice the informant added that a crucifix would also keep a seducer away from a man's wife. It would protect both the husband and woman from sexual aggression. A few weeks later Nitla was seen wearing a rosary around his neck. Small gospels distributed by the priest are also carefully kept. Paulette Donnelly embroidered a moosehide "Bible case" to contain one of these slim volumes. 777

Occasionally occurrences are interpreted as resulting from a favorable disposition on the part of the supernatural environment. Thus a man may ascribe his luck in killing a moose to the fact that he has had the cooperation of the animal realm. Many more times, however, references to luck are simply offhand mentions of a fate whose character the individual is not troubled to analyze.

Two states of existence are possible for the spirit in the afterlife. For those whose lives were free from evil there is heaven and everlasting happiness; for the evil there is hell. Just as heaven is identified with God, hell is associated with the devil. This correlation of an afterlife with the morality of the spirit's earthly career is not perfect, however, since, regardless of his conduct, any person killed by a grizzly bear must go to the bear's "daddy" —the devil. Although hell is recognized as an unpleasant place, few people admitted any realistic fear of it. 775

The idea of praying for the welfare of the dead is known to some informants as a result of church attendance. This suggests the beginnings of belief in a third, temporary state of spiritual existence—purgatory. 775 786 177

Alongside the idea of spiritual immortality remains a belief in reincarnation, the rebirth of the spirit in a child who, as he grows older, recognizes the world as a place where he has already been. One or two children were mentioned who had revealed this *déjà vu* experience. 775

Several forms of divination are practiced more or less seriously by a few Indians. Sometimes the leaves in a tea cup are inspected in order to foretell the results of a prospective 787

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cent animals' flesh. Some fathers warn their sons not to eat moose marrow, the explanation 784
being that marrow will destroy the boy's endurance and thus limit his moose hunting ability.
A number of families avoid feeding their dogs the meat of trapped animals explaining:
"If you do, never catch anything next time." Considerable respect is shown to the bear.
Coming across a bear, River Joe once refused to kill the animal, vaguely explaining his be-
havior by saying that the meat was not good to eat. On another occasion the ethnographer's
four year old son several times threw a bear paw into a brush fire. Each time Donald Suza
pulled it out and finally threw the part into the river. He would not reveal his objection
to burning the paw. In discussing the incident Old Man explained that the Frances Lake
Indians continue to regard "many things" as "bad business" and added that Lady Suza
will not eat bear meat.

The only religious rites and ceremonies in which the Kaska participate are those offici- 796
ated by Catholic missionaries. Such ceremonies include baptism, prayer, Mass, confession, 797
and communion. During the summer, nightly devotions in Lower Post bring many people
together to recite one or two decades of the rosary. The prayers are said in English, although [788]
a few people also know them in Kaska. Apart from such occasions, prayer is limited. River
Joe said that during his wife's illness he had prayed for her improvement. The woman
died and Joe is reported to have expressed resentment that his prayers were not answered. [782]
During the summer, Mass is celebrated every morning but in winter it is limited to Sun-
days. How well the symbolism and liturgy of the rite are understood could not be learned.
When attending church services the sexes generally separate, men sitting on the left side
of the building and women on the right.

Many people go to confession about once a year to confess such sins as drinking, swear- 783
ing, and sexual offenses. The confession, according to Old Man, is prompted by the priest
asking questions like: "Did you swear?" and then requesting the number of times that
the offense was committed. Following confession the people may receive communion.

Christmas is the most important ceremonial holiday. In the winter settlements its cele- 527
bration is sometimes begun on Christmas eve, when a brew is drunk; drinking may continue 177
for several days. If the people are in the trading post, Mass is attended Christmas morning 796
and, sometimes, an afternoon church party is given for children. In the summer of 1945,
a religious ceremony occurred in connection with the consecration of the new church in
Lower Post. The rite was performed by the bishop of the diocese and was witnessed by all
the Indians then in the community. On the following morning a solemn high Mass was
celebrated by the bishop assisted by two missionaries. Both ceremonies were marked by
considerable glamor and quite appreciated by the Indians.

Attitudes of the people toward the priests vary, but in general are marked by respect 797
and some tendency to ingratiation. In the case of many people one of the reasons for attend-
ing religious rites is a desire not to expose themselves to the direct attention of the mis-
sionaries. The priests, who are young men, try to be friendly and democratic and appear to
be sincerely interested in the Indians' temporal and spiritual welfare. Any direct interfer-
ence of the missionaries in the life of the people is resented and may lead to an informal boy-
cott of the church and school. Old Man stated that once when a missionary reported him
to the police for drunkenness, he remained away from church until the priest suitably